

Do I still have to pay child support if I am in prison?



Call the DCS office nearest you or call 800-442-KIDS (5437) to find the office handling your case.

DCS Offices

Everett	800-729-7580 425-438-4800
Kennewick	800-345-9981 509-374-2000
Olympia	800-345-9964 360-664-6900
Seattle	800-526-8658 206-341-7000
Spokane	800-345-9982 509-363-5000
Tacoma	800-345-9976 253-597-3700
Vancouver	800-345-9984 360-696-6100
Wenatchee	800-535-1113 509-886-6800
Yakima	800-441-0859 509-249-6000
Headquarters	800-457-6202 360-664-5000

Legal Resources

Northwest Justice Project Coordinated  
Legal Education, Advice & Referral  
(CLEAR) Project  
888-201-1014  
www.nwjustice.org

Northwest Women’s

Law Center  
Information & referral line  
206-621-7691

Court Web sites

Contact the courts at  
www.courts.wa.gov/

Division of

Child Support

DCS  
PO Box 11520  
Tacoma, WA 98411  
www.dshs.wa.gov/dcs/  
DCS-CRU@dshs.wa.gov  
Legal Clinics  
and Legal Information  
wsba.org/atj/contact/legasst.htm

All information  
in DCS records  
is confidential

You can have someone (a relative, friend or an attorney) call DCS on your behalf. We can answer general questions for anyone, but we cannot discuss specific case details unless we have your written permission.

0255-11486 WA 98411-5520  
TACOMA WA 98411-5520  
DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT  
PO BOX 11520



PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Does my child support responsibility go away while I am in prison?

No. Your child support payments are due every month even if you are in prison or in jail. If you cannot pay, your support debt continues to get bigger each month unless you change the order.

What happens to the 20% deducted from the money going into my inmate account?

Washington State law requires that the Department of Corrections (DOC) take money for child support from earnings, gratuities, and workers compensation benefits paid out to you. The money they take is sent once a month to the Division of Child Support (DCS) to apply to your child support cases. If we receive more than you owe the extra will be refunded back to your inmate account.

What can I do?

- By completing the form in this brochure and mailing it to us, you can ask DCS to:
- Review your child support order to lower the current support payments. This may modify your support order. If you do not have a case with DCS, you can apply for our services.
  - Lower or write-off the portion of your child support debt that is owed to the state of Washington. This process is called a Conference Board.
  - Send you an application for services. We establish paternity, and establish, modify, and enforce orders for child support and health insurance.
  - Release our hold on your driver license.

DCS does **not** provide visitation, custody, or parenting plan services.

How can changing (modifying) my order help me?

- Child support should be set to reflect your current situation. If you want to change the amount your are charged for current support you have to modify your child support order.
- Changing your current support won't change how much debt you already owe.
  - It doesn't happen automatically, you have to fill out paperwork and ask for it to change. It can take months to modify an order and you have to work with us the whole time to make it happen.
  - The new order sets the start date of the change. The earliest it can start is the court filing date. It is **not** the date you asked DCS to review your order.

How can I change the amount I already owe?

Sometimes, where financial hardships occur, DCS will consider forgiving some or all of a child support debt that is owed to the state of Washington. This happens during a process called a Conference Board. The Conference Board Unit **cannot** forgive debt owed directly to someone else or another state. However, the person owed the child support debt can forgive the debt you owe them. If that is something they want to do they must contact DCS for more information.

What if I get a new notice?

DCS can serve you legal notices while you are in prison, including a notice to establish child support.

Do not ignore mail from DCS!

- Usually, you have 20 days to answer the legal notices we send you. (Each notice has information about your rights.)
- If you object to the terms in the notice, you can ask us for relief.
  - If you **do not** answer the notice it will automatically become final after 20 days pass and we will start to enforce it.

What about my driver license?

Let us know when you are in prison or work-release and we will release our hold on your driver license and keep it off until 30 days after you are released. During those 30 days you need to contact us again to work out a payment plan. If you don't your license may be suspended again by child support. The sooner you call DCS the easier it will be for us to work with you. We are required to collect your current child support and something towards any support debt.

What will happen once I find a job?

When you have a child support obligation you are required to notify us each time you get a new job. If you contact us once you find employment we can work with you on the amount you pay each month towards your debt. If you don't notify child support then when we send out the garnishment to your employer it may be at an amount that is higher than what will work for your budget.

Call DCS and we will work with you!

Tape Closed Here Before Mailing

DCS Information Request

Please send me forms to:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask DCS to change my child support order(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apply for full enforcement services from DCS.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask for a Conference Board.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Allow someone else to talk about my case with DCS.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm incarcerated, please release my license.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am disabled and need special help.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I read limited English. Please send the forms in	<input type="text"/>	Language

Other (explain)

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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I am incarcerated at	My DOC # is	My Estimated Release Date is	DCS Case Number
<input type="text"/>			
Name	<input type="text"/>		
Address (Street or PO Box)	<input type="text"/>		
City	State	Zip	<input type="text"/>
Signature	Date	MM / DD / YY	<input type="text"/>